



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES

RIYADH • SAUDI ARABIA



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Ambassador Smith's Statement on Saudi National Day

September 22, 2012



Asalamu Alaykum! On behalf of the U.S. government and the people of the United States, I extend my warm congratulations to the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al Saud, the Deputy Custodian of the two Holy Mosques Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and the people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on your National Day. Let me reaffirm that the United States values Saudi Arabia as a close friend and ally.

Cooperation between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia spans many decades and many fields, and the United States takes pride in the cooperation between our two countries. It ranges from trade to education, science, technology and health – including raising awareness of breast cancer, helping Hajj pilgrims stay healthy and our shared goal of expanding opportunities for all Saudis, including women and youth. It is evident in our work together through international organizations and the humanitarian assistance our two countries provide around the world, including helping the tens of thousands of Syrian refugees and supporting the new government in Yemen.

On this special occasion, I am delighted to report that there are hundreds of U.S. businesses that work hand in hand with businesses in the Kingdom to provide jobs and prosperity for Saudis and Americans, as we are committed to producing new opportunities for the citizens of both of our countries. Of special importance, we want to put a new emphasis on student exchanges and educational partnerships. I know this is something close to King Abdullah's heart.

On this occasion, I salute King Abdullah's initiative to invest in Saudi youth through the King Abdullah Scholarship Program, which has sent more than a hundred thousand of Saudi students to study overseas. We are honored that more than half of those students have chosen to study in the United States. These Saudi students will receive an outstanding education and come back to their country prepared to take it to new heights on the global stage.

I also laud the King's leadership on the many initiatives he has taken both on the local and international scenes. His establishment of the King Abdul Aziz Center for National Dialogue has promoted a culture of dialogue, moderation, and tolerance in the Kingdom and beyond. These positive initiatives have cemented the unity of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and put the country and the region on a path towards a stronger, more prosperous, and more secure future.

As we join you in celebrating this special day, we reaffirm the commitment of the United States to broadening and deepening our partnership with Saudi Arabia in the years to come. We wish you a safe and joyous National Day.

